



Local Efficiency Achievement Program (LEAP)
County Coordinator Fellowship Grant Guidelines
Fiscal Year 2021

State of New Jersey
Philip D. Murphy, Governor

Department of Community Affairs
Lt. Governor Sheila Y. Oliver, Commissioner

New Jersey Department of Community Affairs
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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Department of Community Affairs (DCA) is dedicated to helping local governments improve the quality of life in every one of the state's 565 municipalities. Through a variety of programs, DCA's Division of Local Government Services (DLGS) works with counties and municipalities to streamline government operations and reduce costs and property taxes.

In 2018, Governor Phil Murphy launched the Shared Services program with the appointment of two "Czars," former mayors Nicolas Platt and Jordan Glatt, to promote shared services throughout the State.

In 2019, DLGS established the Local Assistance Bureau (LAB) to provide direct support to local units in a variety of ways. This includes a key collaboration with the Czars and local governments to identify and implement shared services opportunities across the State.

LEAP is a natural extension of this mission.

Sharing services offers numerous benefits for participating communities. It reduces costs, delivers municipal services in a more efficient manner, and generates increased value for each dollar spent while ensuring local units remain responsible stewards of the public trust.

LEAP affords an unprecedented opportunity to incentivize shared services implementation across New Jersey's local government entities, advancing the mission of the Shared Services Program. LEAP facilitates exploring and establishing shared services. LEAP provides counties, municipalities, school districts, authorities, and fire districts assistance for the study or implementation of promising shared services projects undertaken pursuant to the Uniform Shared Service and Consolidation Act. The program is available to all New Jersey local government units.

LEAP is comprised of three primary components: Challenge Grants, Implementation Grants, and County Coordinator Fellowship Grants.

DLGS is responsible for administering the LEAP program. Eligible entities are invited to apply for grant funds under each of the LEAP grants. All information needed to apply is contained in these guidelines and the application package.

LEAP County Coordinator Fellowship Grants allocate \$50,000 to each county for the purpose of hiring a fellow to work full time with the county and each local unit within the county or any entity with whom they may be able to share services to identify and advance shared service opportunities. For those counties already employing or engaging coordinators, this Grant is still available to supplement the coordinator function, but must be a new position, not an offset of expenses incurred for an existing position.

The guidelines and funding levels will be reviewed annually and are subject to change with each funding cycle. Additionally, DCA reserves the right in its sole discretion, to adjust the amount awarded under the LEAP County Coordinator Fellowship Grant by the amount of unexpended funds available in other LEAP program grants.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

New Jersey counties are eligible to receive LEAP County Coordinator Fellowship Grant funding.

FUNDING AVAILABLE

Funding for the LEAP County Coordinator Fellowship Grant originates from \$10 million appropriated through the state budget at P.L.2020, c.97. for Shared Services and School District Consolidation Study and Implementation Grants from the Property Tax Relief Fund.

Each county is invited to apply for a \$50,000 grant to offset the direct salary costs related to the hiring of a one-year full-time shared services coordinator fellow. Renewal of the fellowship grant in future budget years is subject to appropriation.

ELIGIBLE PROJECT CRITERIA

Eligible Applicants must meet the following criteria:

1. Demonstrate the applicant's capacity to provide project management and oversight for all fellowship activities and fiscal operations.
2. Designate a senior county officer as supervisor to direct the Fellow's activities.
3. Commit to the Fellow's attendance at Division training and to providing monthly progress reports that summarize ongoing coordinator activities.
4. Commit to the Fellow's completion of a final report documenting program activities and accomplishments during the fellowship period.
5. Commit to providing employee fringe benefits to the Fellow.

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

LEAP County Coordinator Fellowship Grant funding is available exclusively to offset the direct salary costs related to the hiring of a one-year full-time shared services coordinator fellow.

Ineligible Activities:

- Offsetting compensation of existing employees
- Professional Consulting Contracts

APPLICATION PROCESS

Complete applications must be submitted by the County requesting fellowship funds.

The following forms must be submitted to complete a LEAP County Coordinator Fellowship Grant application:

- a. Grant Application.
- b. County Board of Freeholders Resolution
- c. Brief description of existing shared services coordination activities, if any.

Two hard copies must be received no later than seven (7) calendar days following email submission and mailed to:

Attn: LEAP Grant
New Jersey Department of Community Affairs
Division of Local Government Services
P.O. Box 803
Trenton, NJ 08625-0803

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

DLGS must be in receipt of one electronic copy of the complete application package by 5:00 P.M. EST on February 26, 2021, in order for the applicant to be eligible to receive fellowship grant funding. The complete application package must be submitted electronically to dlgs.leapgrant@dca.nj.gov. The date of email submission shall constitute the date filed. Two hard copies of the complete application package postmarked by February 26, 2021, must be received no later than seven (7) calendar days following email submission.

Incomplete applications will not be considered for funding. Applications not submitted on or before 5 p.m. February 26, 2021, will be rejected.

GRANT REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

DLGS will evaluate all applications for completion and viability. Each qualifying applicant will be notified of the award on March 26, 2021.

GRANT FUNDING PROCESS

All awards are subject to the availability of funds.

Upon completion of grant review and grantee notification, DLGS will enter into an agreement with applicants approved for funding.

LEAP County Coordinator Fellowship Grants are paid upon award. Grantees will receive payment via electronic transfer of funds to the account and financial institution identified by the grantee within 30 days of execution of the Grant Agreement.

Grantees shall maintain and retain accounting and other grant-related records and information for the duration of the fellowship period, and as otherwise required by applicable state and local laws and regulations.

Such records shall be subject to examination, audit, and inspection by DLGS and/or any other federal, state, or local agency that has jurisdictional authority.

DLGS reserves the right to rescind all or part of an award, reclaim grant funds or withhold future grant funding and/or disqualify a grantee from participating in future grant awards if any condition of the grant program is unmet, including if grant funds received by the grantee are not properly accounted for, or if the grantee fails to meet reporting or certification requirements.

GRANT CLOSEOUT PROCESS

At the conclusion of each annual fellowship period, which shall coincide with the expiration of any fellowship's initial one-year term, the recipient county must submit a final report documenting that all administrative responsibilities and required activities under the Grant Agreement have been satisfactorily completed. This shall include the Fellow's Final Report.

ASSISTANCE

Applicants may contact program staff at (609) 292-6858 to discuss program and project needs up to submission of the application. Questions can also be submitted via e-mail to dlgs.leapgrant@dca.nj.gov.